



# Chamber's Journal

## SIXTH SERIES.

### NURSING IN WEST AFRICA.

By MARY H. KINGSLEY, Author of *West African Studies*.

#### PART I.

**W**E are all Imperialists now,' said a popular statesman the other day; and his audience enthusiastically agreed with him. I suppose, in a way, they were both right; but still I often wish some thinker

would turn his attention to the subject of the nature of this imperialism that we all now feel; for, like the influenza, it seems little understood, and it takes different forms in different individuals. For example, my peace of mind the other day was seriously disturbed by a violent quarrel between two of my friends. One announced that he hoped 'we should get simply cast out of South Africa;' the other, that 'we should simply cast every other race out' of that interesting region. They both assured me that the safety and development of the Empire on sound lines depended on their respective views being carried out. They were good men both, though neither, as Herodotus would say, found any belief in me; the school of imperialism I am a humble follower of being the old British imperialism that just believes Britons are Britons everywhere, and must therefore assist and support each other in their rights in fair weather and foul, it matters not what land they may be in. But there are other kinds of imperialism than mine; and I wish, as aforesaid, some one would study the subject and give imperialism a creed and a policy we could all subscribe to and all co-operate in carrying out, for it seems a pity this great national sentiment we have with us to-day should not be shaped to some practical purpose.

I will, however, here only plead that this imperialism be brought into play in the direction of saving the grievous waste of white men's lives in West Africa—namely, the saving of the lives of those fellow-countrymen of ours who for Britain's Empire, commerce, and religion go

and work in the deadly West African region. The loss of life among these men is terrible. For more than two hundred years we have been paying a toll to King Death in West Africa that has been too heavy a drain for us to prosper under. Every endeavour—missionary, mercantile, and administrative—has been so grievously hindered and hampered by that toll that in West Africa we have no advance to show that can compare with our advance in other regions; and behind the public loss we have thus suffered, and still suffer, there has been, and there is, a wilderness of sorrow, poverty, and gloom peopled by widows and orphans, sisters and friends, who mourn their dead and have to battle with the world unaided and uncheered by the men who died of fever far away—men who have too often died unnecessarily and ingloriously; for their death aids not one cause that Britain has at heart there, but hinders all. How much longer shall we be willing to pay this toll to King Death? Surely no longer, if it be true that we are all Imperialists now.

I, whose imperialism is unity and sympathy and help among all Britons wheresoever they may dwell, ask if those of us who live in these little islands in the North Sea, who handle the reins of power, and who profit so much from the enterprise of those who go overseas to such places as West Africa, will longer remain content to let our fever-stricken men in West Africa die like dogs in ditches, or will say to them, 'My brother, I will give you free-handed out of our mutual-made wealth the same help I give to a pauper lunatic or a wayside tramp who never left these islands in his life, and who never was of any use to them or us.' If you will say this you will be a sound Imperialist.

You may object, however, that the men who go to West Africa and such-like places go for purely personal reasons of their own: for advancement in civil or military careers, for mission

work which is its own reward, for the sake of making money in trade. Let them provide their own protection against the local danger of disease. Do we say this to the wayside tramp? No. Then why say so to the men we are every day more indebted to? Do we say this to the soldiers and sailors who go out to fight red war for us? Again, no. Then why say so to those heroes of commerce who face King Death in West Africa, and by so doing keep thousands of our working and manufacturing classes at home happy, safe, educated, well paid, and well cared for?

Truly there are many ways whereby this British Empire is fed, armed, and educated; but of all those ways there is not one more truly important than the control of the tropics; and of all the tropical regions we hold there are none equal in natural wealth to West Africa. Certain things—cotton, hardwoods, rubber, fibre, vegetable oils, tea, coffee, cocoa, and tobacco—we as a great manufacturing and trading nation must have. That it is better to have a supply-region for these things under our own flag the cotton famine in Lancashire in the days of the Civil War in America demonstrated; and the commercial war against our trade now waged by Continental nations, and America with high tariffs, still point this out. People nowadays are often hasty, and think they can measure the importance to us of a region by only looking at the bare total amount of the trade that region does with us; but this is not a true test. It must also be taken into consideration whether we can get the stuff that region exports to us equally good and cheap from elsewhere. Judged by this consideration, the worth of West Africa to us is high; therefore, the worth to us of the men who now work there is very high, for without them it would, in every respect save for mission work, be valueless.

Passing from this important point which I have referred to so often, I will now make a few suggestions as to how we may help, not only West Africa, but our tropical African possessions generally. Much, I think, may be done by supporting Mr Chamberlain's noble scheme now in operation, which consists of two branches—one the scientific study of diseases peculiar to the tropics; the other the supply of a working medical and nursing staff there. Undoubtedly Mr Chamberlain has been prompted by sympathy in taking up this good work, and he has been splendidly supported by the merchants of Liverpool and Manchester, who individually had long striven for the same end. Certainly this far-sighted scheme, employing in the public service both the laboratory and the hospital, will do a great and beneficent work in our tropical empire, and it deserves the support of all Imperialists. Personal tastes and peculiarities in our education may prevent some of us from personally pursuing the bacilli in the microscopic field, and personal duties may prevent

some from going out as nurses under the Colonial Nursing Association; but I cannot conceive of the existence of any objection to aid the schools for the study of tropical medicine in London and Liverpool, and also the Colonial Nursing Association, with funds to carry on the noble work; for that expense should not be borne by the State. It must be remembered that the British Empire is great because her citizens do not depend on Government as a child does on its mother; her citizens are grown men capable of carrying out great imperial schemes by themselves. In this matter of saving the life of white men in West Africa our Government, as represented by Mr Chamberlain, has done its part ungrudgingly. Let us do the rest: man, work, and pay for it, as our forefathers in their day did things for themselves and the Empire without Government aid.

I am not urging you to fit out an expedition to singe the King of Spain's beard, as Sir Francis Drake did; but for one in the same spirit—namely, to singe King Death's, and crush his Armada and make him lower the toll he now levies on the lives of our fellow-countrymen. Let us fight this enemy in the spirit Francis Drake fought, as independent men; then we shall win in this age of Victoria just as Drake won in the days of Elizabeth, and be in likewise Britons worthy of the name of Imperialists.

I now turn to suggesting means whereby this campaign against pestilence in West Africa may be aided, and do so with a certain knowledge of West Africa's social and natural conditions.

Ever since I became acquainted with West Africa I have had a strong conviction that what is wanted is a hospital-cruiser; and the more I know of those regions strengthens my opinion on that point. A properly equipped hospital-ship, with a staff of trained white female nurses on board, two medical men, a dispenser, and a boy, would do work no other kind of hospital could do so well.

Then there should be in each European settlement ashore a branch hospital in charge of the colonial medical officer of the district, as there is now in many places. In these shore-hospitals, at the small stations at any rate, the nursing should be done by men—white hospital orderlies for the white patients, black for the native wards. These shore-hospitals, both in large and small settlements, should deal with white patients who could not immediately be put on board the hospital-ship; but the rule should be that as soon as a white patient could be got on board that ship he should be so transferred.

Now, I am quite well aware that there are objections to hospital-ships in the tropics. When they are moored there is the burning question of bilge-water. I will not discourse on the subject of bilge-water, as inexperience thereof might make the explanation wearisome. Any one ac-

quainted with the bilge-water question knows it is of engrossing interest. Bilge is a prince among smells, and if you have ever fallen under its power you will always think that every terrific thing in smells is a manifestation of bilge-water. I remember on one occasion, when on board a moored hulk—not a hospital-ship—smelling in the evening something that called for mention, so I mentioned it. 'Oh,' said my companions—more under the sway of bilge-belief than I was, from their greater knowledge of its power—'it's only our bilge-water.' In the morning we found it was the rotting carcass of an elephant that had floated down the river and now hung in the mooring-chain. After a considerable time was spent in getting rid of the carcass, I said, 'For goodness' sake, gentlemen, stir up your bilge-water and let the smells fight it out together while we go ashore for a spell.' 'No,' said my companions, terror-stricken at the suggestion; 'you do not know our bilge-water when its back's up. It would stretch you if you were half-way across Africa. This elephant is mere lavender-water to it.' This was a more dreadful bilge-water than a hospital-ship would have. Still, though bad, bilge-water is not necessarily fatal, under proper management.

Then there is the objection to the motion of a vessel moored at sea. The West African seas are not stormy except during a tornado; and these may be expected twice a day during two seasons in the year. I do not say they will occur regularly twice a day; but during these seasons you must keep an eye lifting for them, for they will come if so disposed. When they do come they relieve the monotony of life on board a hulk considerably, and will no doubt occasionally cause a hospital-hulk to break her moorings and go adrift out to sea. Still, as it is healthier out at sea, a little trip will not matter much; and there is not a colony in West Africa that would view unmoved the departure of its hospital-ship with the white lady nursing-staff on board, or would

not send out immediate assistance to fetch her home again.

Then there is another objection—the difficulty of getting men in such a place as the Gold Coast out across the surf to the hospital-ship; and much was made of this difficulty when I first advocated such floating hospitals for West Africa. However, when we remember that, in desperation, sick men are at present brought out through the surf to get a last chance, by getting out to sea in a mail-boat, without proper accommodation for such patients, this objection to hospital-ships is ridiculous. In fact, I am convinced the advantages of a floating hospital—its comfort, cleanliness, and sanitary condition generally—far outweigh any possible difficulties.

I venture, also, to say that even the admitted disadvantages would disappear were the floating hospitals fitted as cruisers rather than moored hulks; one such cruiser for Gambia and Sierra Leone, and one for the Gold Coast, Lagos, and Niger Territories. Even the moored hulk, with all its shortcomings, is preferable to any so-called sanatorium on high ground in West Africa; but, as I have published my reasons for distrusting the efficiency of a sanatorium ashore, these need not be stated here.

As an alternative plan, however, I should suggest that every mail-steamer running to West Africa should have a large, roomy, properly fitted hospital-cabin, with a trained nurse in charge—the steamers already carry doctors. This nurse should be one from a shore-hospital, thus giving these women, in rotation, a change from shore-life now and then. By this plan, instead of the expensive system now in vogue of a voyage home every eight months or so, the nurse could serve a year or eighteen months in comparative safety on the coast, which she certainly could not do in safety ashore. The mail-steamer should act in connection with the shore-hospitals on the same system as the hospital-cruiser referred to in my first scheme.

## OF ROYAL BLOOD.

### A TALE OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.—CONFESSION.

'AND then?' I asked eagerly.

'Well, I left Vienna with my family, and we spent the summer at Brandenburg and the winter at Beaulieu. Then we went on a round of visits to London, to the Hague, and to Rome, until all thought of the wretched convict passed from my mind. One day, however, while on a visit to the Empress at Berlin, I received from Krauss a letter dated from the prison of Budapest, containing a cool, alarming demand—namely, that I should go at once to

the Emperor Francis Joseph and beg for his immediate release. To this I made no response, whereupon I received several other letters, in which he repeated his demand; adding that he knew the Emperor would accede to my wish provided the release was kept a secret and he gave an undertaking never to set foot on Austrian soil again. I replied, telling him that no Hapsburg had ever assisted one guilty of treason, and that I would be no exception. Then, in rejoinder, came another brief note which held me terrified, for he threatened that if he were not released

within fourteen days he would write to the newspapers a certain statement concerning me—a statement which I knew too well, alas! would cause a sensation throughout Europe. Defiance was useless. This keen-witted and unscrupulous spy held me irrevocably in his power; hence, though I hated him and detested his memory, I was compelled to go to the Emperor and plead for his release. At first I was unsuccessful; but, having concocted an ingenious story, I at last succeeded, and the man who had so coolly bartered his country's military secrets was escorted to the frontier.

'Many months passed and I heard nothing of him,' she continued. 'Last summer, however, I came to London and stayed here with my old teacher of English, when one day he called, and from his conversation I learnt that he had left the secret service of Germany and entered that of France; further, that together with the woman who had so cleverly assisted him in Vienna, he had devised a deeply-laid scheme for getting possession of certain secrets of the British Foreign Office. He told me how at Downing Street the French had established a complete system of espionage, and, equally with Germany, were aware of nearly all that occurred. So cleverly were documents copied or their purport noted that no suspicion was ever aroused; and, further, he said that one of the principal secret agents was the wife of a trusted official through whose hands all treaties, or drafts of treaties, passed.'

'And that woman,' I interrupted, 'is now before us.'

'Why should I thus be implicated?' Judith cried resentfully. Then, turning to her companion, she said in Hungarian, 'The affair is growing too ugly for my liking.'

'No doubt,' I exclaimed severely. 'You remember your brief married life with poor Gordon, and the circumstances of his death, which were more than peculiar.'

She glared at me fixedly, but made no reply.

'Continue,' I said, addressing Mélanie, who was now calm and determined, and spoke with a fearlessness which showed her resolution to explain the whole circumstances.

'He said this woman had obtained knowledge that certain negotiations were in progress between Belgium and England which, in event of war, would seriously affect the success of any operations by France. They had gained a good deal of knowledge of the preliminaries, which had been carefully transmitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, where the information had created great consternation. Orders had therefore been given to this arch-traitor and spy to secure at all cost the original documents on which the supposed secret treaty was based; and it was with that object he had come to me.'

'I suppose he wanted you to assist him,' I said.

'Yes,' she answered. 'He unfolded an elaborate

scheme by which I was to help him. Briefly, it was that on a certain day the correspondence between the King and your Ambassador, Sir John Drummond, would be transmitted by special messenger from the Legation to Downing Street; and he proposed that I should travel with the messenger from Brussels to London with an exact duplicate of the Foreign Office despatch-box, and on the journey contrive to exchange the box containing the State secrets for the counterfeit he had prepared with marvellous ingenuity.'

She paused. I listened to her statement in amazement. Resuming the narrative, she said:

'At first I allowed my disgust to overrule my discretion, and angrily ordered him from the house; but very soon, from his threatening attitude, I saw that his fixed intention was that I should render him assistance. Thus, from fear of the exposure he might make regarding myself, I was compelled to submit, and to become a political agent.'

'You!' I cried. 'Did you actually assist him?'

'Yes; under compulsion, and in order to avoid the gross and terrible scandal which he might bring upon my family, I was compelled to sacrifice myself and become this man's cat's-paw in his nefarious schemes.'

'Then you actually stole the King's correspondence?' I gasped, utterly amazed.

'For a long time I refused to consent,' she answered. 'He called fully a dozen times; at last, finding him inexorable, I went to Brussels, carrying with me the dummy despatch-box. Then, on the day he had stated—his information coming, I suppose, from some secret agent in the Belgian Ministry—I saw on the platform of the Gare du Nord at Brussels the messenger bearing the despatches. I entered the same compartment, and contrived to get into conversation with him. The dummy box was concealed in my dressing-bag, and I awaited my opportunity to draw it forth and exchange it for the one he had placed on the seat beside him. It was a hazardous and delicate piece of work, and no opportunity presented itself during the journey to Ostend or while on board the steamer bound for Dover—where, by the way, my bag was not opened by the Customs officers. The Queen's messenger—Graves was his name, I think—kept an ever-watchful eye upon his despatches. During the journey we had become very good friends, and when at Dover we entered the express for London he suddenly asked whether I would like some tea. To this I replied in the affirmative, and, asking me to keep an eye on his things, he descended and obtained the tea from the refreshment-room lad on the platform. In the moment of his absence, however, I drew forth the counterfeit box Krauss had given me, and placed it on the seat; then I slipped the box containing the despatches into my dressing-bag. My heart was beating wildly when he returned, for I feared he might discover the trick; but so



well had the box been imitated that he merely placed it on the rack above his head, and settled down and chatted affably with me during the remainder of our journey to London. Eager to escape at the earliest possible moment, I told him I was on a visit to some friends at Horsham, in Sussex, and therefore London Bridge was my nearest station, for there I could obtain a train direct to my destination. So I left him when we arrived at the first stoppage in London; and after the train had crossed the bridge in the direction of Cannon Street, I at once took a ticket back to Dover, and a quarter of an hour later was again on my return journey, having successfully accomplished my first adventure as a spy. How I existed during that journey back to Ostend I scarcely know. So intense was my excitement, and so great my fear of arrest, that I passed hours of agony and dread, until in the gray of morning I found myself once more in Brussels. I concealed the unopened box in one of my trunks in my own room at the Palace. Later that day I telegraphed the result of my journey to the man Krauss. He was in London, and replied that he had further important affairs there, but that he would meet me in Brussels in three days. He also wrote by the same post saying he would meet me three days later at the evening promenade concert in the Wauxhall Garden, where I was to hand him the stolen correspondence, which he would then convey at once to Paris.

'And did he meet you?' I asked, eager to know what had become of the file of the King's letters.

'Yes,' she answered. 'But on the night following my return from London I made a discovery which entirely altered my plans. I found that you, Philip, whom I had met in the Bois, were an agent of the English Government; and I then saw that if I parted with the stolen papers opprobrium must fall upon you. I learnt from the King's own lips that you were employed on secret service, charged with the task of making inquiries into certain operations of the *cabinet noir* in Brussels, and with obtaining such information as might combat the conspiracies of the enemies of Belgium and England. Well, I may as well confess that I loved you, Philip; and with a vague idea of rendering a service to you, as well as to the King, I refused to give up the stolen letters.'

'You refused?' I cried quickly. 'Then have they not fallen into this man's hands?'

'No,' she answered. 'The unopened box is still in my possession.'

'Then you have saved England from a deadly peril—from a disastrous and terrible war!' I exclaimed, almost breathless, but jubilant.

'When Krauss came to me and I refused to deliver up the despatches,' she explained, 'he grew furious, threatening me with the same menace of exposure he had successfully used to secure his release and obtain my assistance in his master-stroke of espionage. But from what I had

learnt by diligent inquiry, I knew full well that you were in active search of the missing letters; and, further, I felt assured that they must be of gravest importance in the critical political outlook. Hence, after fully viewing the situation, I determined to disregard his threats and keep the correspondence intact. I feared to reveal my wretched story of woman's weakness lest you should cast me aside as a spy; and it was for that reason I have been compelled to preserve silence so long. You will now understand the reason of our midnight meetings on the boulevards, and of this man's murderous attack upon me. At that moment, so infuriated was he by my refusal to deliver up the papers that I believe he would have murdered me had you not come to my aid.'

'It is amazing!' I exclaimed, dumfounded, when she paused.

'Yes, the facts are indeed extraordinary,' she said. 'When Krauss found me inexorable and determined not to betray the secrets of English diplomacy, he first employed that tall man whose presence at the Palace you noticed, as a spy on me, and then he devised, with vile ingenuity, another plan, which, but for you, might have succeeded. By artful plotting he contrived to introduce this woman, his accomplice, as my maid, in order that she might be enabled to search my belongings and secure the papers which the French Government were so anxious to possess. Fortunately, however, you recognised her, and then I instantly discerned her object in entering my service.'

Judith Kohn laughed defiantly; while Krauss, sullen and silent, seemed undecided how to act now that his secret designs were made known and he was denounced as a cunning, despicable spy, whose craftiness had been frustrated just when he hoped to make his greatest *coup*.

With the vindictiveness characteristic of such women, Judith Kohn poured forth on me a torrent of abuse, referring in no measured terms to the death of the Chevalier de Jedina, and declaring that I was a murderer. Mélanie, however, took no heed of her libellous utterances, for she was satisfied as to the truth of the explanation I had given of the dastardly plot against me, by which a man's life was sacrificed.

'But the stolen despatch-box—where is it?' I asked of Mélanie.

For answer she crossed to an antique carved oak chest, which she opened, and, lifting out the box so cleverly snatched from Graves's possession, handed it to me. As I took the box I noticed that Sir John Drummond's seals on it were still actually intact.

The covetous eyes of the pair were fixed on the box; and, fearing they might make a dash to overpower me and obtain possession of its precious contents, I whipped out my revolver and held it in readiness. The sight of my weapon cowed them;

possibly they remembered that I could generally shoot straight.

'You have, by refusing to part with this, *Méline*,' I said, placing my hand upon the despatch-box, 'rendered a service to my Queen and country of a magnitude it is almost impossible to comprehend. Had these letters been in the hands of our enemies it is absolutely certain that to-day the whole of Europe would have been convulsed by the most terrible and disastrous war the world has ever known. Driven by this pair of malefactors to commit a treasonable and dishonourable offence, you fortunately recognised the extreme gravity of the situation in time, and thus the honour and security of England has been preserved.'

'Had I not met you in the Bois, Philip,' she said

in a broken voice, 'I should certainly have parted with the box in order to obtain a respite from this man's eternal persecutions, for he made it the price of my deliverance from this thralldom. God knows how I have suffered; how, day by day, I strove to brace myself up to confess all to you, but had not the courage; how day by day I prayed to Heaven to deliver me from the hateful bond.'

'But what was this bond?' I asked, puzzled. 'Why were you in constant dread of this man? Why were his threats so potent in compelling you to act as you have done?'

'Ah!' laughed Krauss, with sarcasm. 'Now tell your lover the truth in that also. You said you would not conceal anything.'

She was silent, and the colour again left her face.

## THE SQUALOR OF ROME.



OME, the symbolic capital of Italy—for it is not the same to Italy that London is to England or Paris to France—has a criminal class of its own, resembling in some points, but differing in many from the criminal classes of other great cities.

Rome has no *mafia* like Sicily or *camorra* like Naples; it has not even the *teppisti* of Milan or the *barabba* of Turin. It has, however, criminals of a higher and a lower grade. Proofs of this were shown not long ago, when two mysterious assassinations occurred, caused neither by love nor greed; the victim in one instance being a young aristocrat, and in the other a common cook.

The chief nest of criminals in Rome is the quarter lying between Campo Verano and Piazza Vittorio Emanuele. This quarter is almost wholly filled by the street called Rione di San Lorenzo. Secondary evil localities are situated in Trastevere and towards Prati di Castello.

The torrent of vice flowing through Rome was accumulated in the muddy region near Castel St Angelo until the renovation of the city demolished all the old buildings and drove the inhabitants away.

The street of San Lorenzo has not the filthy appearance of the worst quarters in Naples; but it has an intensely sad and dreary aspect, breathing of poverty—a poverty pervading every tenement-house, every shop, every group of women and children working and playing under the great portals leading into the courtyards.

In these latter, and from the surrounding windows of the four or five stories, hang strings of clothing wet from the wash. At sunset, when the glow from the Campagna can be seen between the roofs of the tall houses, the place seems even more melancholy. Workmen return, toil-worn, from their labour; untidy women gossip on the landings of the huge staircases; children shout

and scream with renewed vigour; and the costermongers in the street cry out their wares with greater persistence as the day declines. Then thieves and wretches begin to creep from hidden corners; the drinking-shops become crowded. In Piazza Guglielmo Pepe, close at hand, the penny theatres, booths, rope-dancers, and *saltimbanques* are stared at by the destitute and patronised by those who have a farthing to spare or to risk in some illegal game.

The accounts of overcrowding given by the authors of the book before us, *La Mala Vita a Roma*, greatly resemble the vivid pictures of overcrowding in London published in the *Daily News*. The authors describe a large tenement-house in Via dei Marsi, in which most of the rooms are rented at five francs a month. It looks towards the Campagna, and contains an enormous population. The tyrant of the tenants is the inevitable *guarda-porta*, or doorkeeper, an old hag who knows everything about the occupants of the different flats, and very often has their fate in her hands—for it is to her that the police apply when wanting information concerning some suspected person. She it is who is questioned by charitable ladies when they distribute soup-tickets and the like; and she acts as arbitrator in a quarrel or undertakes the office of spy.

This hag pretends that she never meddles in other people's business; but she cannot hold her tongue, and retails all she knows of the scandal of the place with a malignity proper to women of her class and profession. See her talking to that worn woman, who wears a 'fringe,' a low-necked yellow bodice, and a purple skirt. The woman dandles a neighbour's child on her knee, while she makes wicked remarks, in a peculiar dialect, on the passers-by. The great staircase of the house is full of shabby men and women going up or down. Some sit on the steps; others cook their mess of greens on little terra-cotta

stoves placed on the landing outside their door. Now and then a young man passes who is distinguished by a thick lock of hair hanging over his forehead and a bold and impudent stare: a thief, and worse than a thief, he lives on the abandoned woman over whom he tyrannises.

There are also some honest folk among the wretched crowd: poor mothers who work hard for their little children and for their husbands out of work or dying from fever. Such women lower their eyelids modestly as one passes by, and never beg, but try to hide themselves and their poverty.

Here is a small room which is a type of many others. Two boards resting on iron supports form the bed for the parents and four children. The parents are flower-sellers out of work—that is, not working for a florist; but they endeavour to buy enough material to make a wreath or fill a basket, which they may sell for a trifle. When you give them money or a soup-ticket, a little boy, to whom his father has whispered a word, takes a violet from the table, and, with Italian grace, touches your sleeve, places the flower in your hand, and, with a murmured '*Grazie*,' runs away.

In another room, scarcely larger, lives a washerwoman with five children ranging from nine to seventeen years of age, who sleep on one straw mattress. Two young joiners lodge in an adjoining room, paying the washerwoman five sous a day for the accommodation. The woman declares that she and her children are starving, and that the latter cannot go to school because they have no decent clothing; but in a drawer of the table is hidden white bread of the finest quality, and plates with traces of gravy are to be seen, and empty bottles still odorous of wine, which speak of good fare.

Many of the tenants of these slums are consumptive, even in 'sunny Italy,' and unable to work. One such patient and his wife live on a little food doled out to them by a relative, with, in addition, about six sous a day earned by the wife taking care of the children of half-a-dozen neighbours while the mothers are out at work. The couple also lodge an old woman, who sleeps on a straw mattress in their own room; the old woman helping to pay the rent.

In another room, the rent of which is six francs a month, we find four small children all alone; their parents are away gathering herbs in the fields. There is absolutely nothing in this room but a bench, and across one corner is stretched a cord on which hang ragged clothes.

In one similar miserable den lies a dead child, covered with vermin; the mother, indifferent or stupefied, gazes at the priest who has been called in to give extreme unction, while five children stare carelessly at their dead sister, and are full of curiosity about the sacred rites.

The most awful promiscuous herding together of both sexes is to be found in another almost

dark room, where an old beggar, the tenant of the place, sleeps on a sack in one corner with his aged wife; and he lets two other sacks, one to a workman eighteen years of age, and the other to three orphan sisters, the eldest eighteen years old and the youngest nine. The poverty of all of them is so abject that the gift of a pair of old boots makes them happy.

Let us go down to a lower story and visit four orphans who live there. The eldest is nineteen years old, and has been in hospital with fever until a few days ago. She is haggard and pale, and her eyes are large and hollow. An old shawl, faded and torn, is thrown over her head and shivering shoulders. She and her next eldest sister are seeking situations as servants; but who would engage girls who look so weak and incapable? Who, were the two away, will take care of the younger sisters?

On the walls of all these miserable dwellings designs and sentences have been traced by the tenants in charcoal, paint, or any colouring matter that came handy. Many of the rude drawings are obscene; many are figures of men drawn by children, and are identical with such found all over the world. Inscriptions such as 'Famine!' 'Starvation!' or 'Viva Garibaldi!' are frequent.

To leave this hive of misery and in a few moments change the scene to the gardens of the Pincio or the gay crowd on the Corso is to feel acutely the vast difference which exists between the lives of the rich and the poor, and to cease to wonder that very often the former class is hated by the latter.

Our authors, Signor Niceforo and Signor Siquhele have drawn vivid pictures of the fortune-tellers, hags who prey on the superstition of the ignorant Roman populace, and even wrest money from the foolish of the upper classes. A typical fortune-teller is Teresinaccia, nicknamed *La Strega*, or the witch. She inhabits a decent tenement-apartment in Via Margherita, and her parlour is furnished with some attempt at elegance. She is well dressed, for she is a fashionable fortune-teller, and demands one lira for each telling of the cards; therefore she looks down on humbler colleagues who are content with a few sous. In one corner of her parlour stands the wooden figure of a wizard, peaked cap on head and magic wand in hand. A young working-girl arrives to consult the fortune-teller, who, after reading the cards, advises her to use magic to hasten her lover, as he is slow in proposing marriage. 'What shall I do?' asks the girl. 'Have you a lock of his hair with you?' questions the witch. The girl produces from the bosom of her dress a lock of hair tied with a gold thread. Teresinaccia takes down a crucifix from the wall, places it on the table, and lays upon it half of the hair. Then, kindling charcoal in a small stove, she begins to mutter an incantation as absurd as it is blas-

phemous, spits three times on the crucifix, and ends by enjoining the girl to recite the *Ave Maria* three times. The hag then repeats many nonsensical verses, in which the name of Beelzebub is mentioned, and throws the half-lock of hair she has reserved on the live-coals. The girl pays two hard-earned francs and goes her way. Presently there enters a shoemaker, who boldly declares that he desires the death of a woman he hates. Thereupon the hag produces a board on which a live frog is fastened by means of four pins. She bids the man pierce the stomach of the frog with twelve other pins, saying that each prick will be transferred to the heart of the woman on whom he wishes to be revenged, and she will die as soon as the frog ceases to live, which may be at once or some weeks later. The man obeys, while the hag recites an incantation to St Colomba and St Giovanna. When the pins are all placed she bids the man kneel down and recite a nonsensical paternoster. Here we have cruelty and blasphemy combined.

A fortune-teller of a lower order, who lives in a dirty and obscure house, is constantly applied to by jealous lovers. A girl who has a hated rival sends the latter, under the veil of friendship, to consult the fortune-teller, who is prepared beforehand to frighten her from her pursuit of the man she loves. While the hag mixes the cards and the girl watches, three knocks are heard at the door. 'That is a bad sign,' says the witch. 'It means that you are not beloved.' The fortune-teller continues to lay the cards several times, but always with a bad result. The girl is told that the man she loves has no intention of marrying her, and is advised to have recourse to all sorts of magic, for which she pays a considerable sum. The rival who has sent her also pays the witch, who thus earns a double fee. The objects sold by the witch as charms are many and various. One is a bit of rag; another is a purse containing salt, a bit of hay, some barley, and some nails. These charms are said to lose their power after a month or two, when they must be replaced. Packs of cards which have been blessed by a priest are considered very efficacious.

Such fortune-tellers as Teresinaccia are also frequently so-called 'makers of angels'—that is, they sell pills for illegal purposes; and the number of girls and women of the lower classes who have recourse to these infernal arts, for which sums of twenty to a hundred francs are paid, is frightful. The Roman poet Gioacchino Belli wrote a sonnet, entitled *La Strega* ('The Witch'), referring to this horrible phase of modern Roman life.

Passing over a description of vice in the chapters entitled 'The Demi-Vierges of Rome,' 'Thieves and Beggars,' and one on the thieves' jargon of the *Mala Vita*, we come to an account of the deleterious influence of permitting the

prisoners to meet together in large rooms, passing the time in relating their several adventures; the older ones instructing the novices, who have, perhaps, barely entered on a life of crime, into the best means of robbery, cheating, and all forms of vice.

Confirmed criminals regard the prison as a place of temporary repose, and play like children at all sorts of games, which they contrive to make both cruel and wicked. The victim of the game is always the new-comer, who, in the jargon of the place, is called the *burro*, a name no doubt derived from the Spanish *burro* (ass); and he is the object of practical jokes which deprive him of sleep, food, and all comfort.

A curious game is that called 'The Smuggler.' The prisoners stretch a counterpane over four benches, so that a man can creep through underneath. Each player takes the name of some article of contraband; but the novice is given the name of 'Pepper.' Then each man in turn creeps under the counterpane at one side, and as he issues at the other he calls out his name. Another man, acting as Custom-house officer, waits, besom in hand, for the appearance of the 'smuggler.' As soon as the turn of the novice comes, and he calls out 'Pepper!' as instructed, all the other players fall upon him and beat him with right goodwill.

These prison games are all founded on a base of cruelty, risk, and fortitude; therefore they have a certain psychological interest. Almost all the amusements of prisoners end in the shedding of blood; and it seems that the authorities are unable to maintain discipline and order. Especially is it impossible to prevent those who do work from secreting pointed nails, bits of sharp steel, or a knife, which they hide in the most ingenious manner. A very dangerous game is called the *Patta*, in which there are two players. One holds in each hand a small stick with a nail or other sharp point fastened at the end; then, with his arms at full stretch, he strikes the points together. The task of the other player is to pass his head between the two points without being struck, if possible; but generally he is struck, getting severe pricks or stabs on the temple or face. Some of the men, however, do not cease playing till they have received fifteen or sixteen pricks deep enough to leave scars.

In another game one of the players places the palm of his hand flat on the table with the fingers outstretched, while the other strikes with the armed stick rapidly in the spaces between the fingers. When the striker happens to hit a finger the players change places; and woe to him who refuses to place his hand on the table when his turn comes.

Well-known children's games acquire a fierce character when played by criminals. In 'Blind-man's Buff' the blinded man seeks for his companions with a handkerchief in which is tied a stone or heavy ball, which he launches with full



force at a person whom he believes to be within his reach, often hurting him severely. 'Skipping' is also managed in such a way as frequently to produce serious hurt, and prisoners speak of this game as very dangerous. When a player jumps, the two who hold the rope raise or lower it suddenly, and so trip him up, and cause him to fall heavily on the stone pavement. 'Leap-frog' is also rendered dangerous in a similar manner, the player who 'gives a back' suddenly starting erect, so as to throw the leaper backwards to the ground.

In other games fortitude is the absolute condition of victory. For example, one of two players puts his closed fist on the table, tightly holding two large needles so that the points protrude. The other player strikes his own closed fist on the needles, and the game is to see who can best resist the pain of inevitable punctures.

Love of combat is shown in all these prison amusements; and as games are, everywhere, due to superabundant vital activity, it is evident that this is specially prominent in criminals. Professor Lombroso ascribes the peculiar quickness and agility of criminals to a kind of simian nature, showing a great development of the motor at the expense of the cerebral centres; and the intense admiration which all criminals bestow on proofs of physical force belongs also to the primitive stage of civilisation.

The authors of this interesting book conclude by advising a thorough reform of criminal law, and especially do they advocate the creation of penal establishments in which professional criminals would be entirely separated from those who are just entering on a career of crime, and might therefore be saved.

## THE OPAL BRACELET.

### CHAPTER II.



EXT day everything in the drawing-room and dining-room was turned out of doors without result. Not a trace was to be found anywhere of the unlucky opal bracelet.

Lady Crescent sent round in the morning for latest reports, and Marion came in the afternoon with similar purpose. One or other of them continued to call every afternoon during the succeeding week. Twice, after sitting in the drawing-room with Mrs Lamington, her ladyship penetrated the schoolroom.

On the first of these visits Evie and Sid were playing in the bow-window. I was writing at the centre-table. Though outwardly controlled, I was inwardly nervous at the unwonted intrusion.

'I suppose you know I haven't heard anything of my bracelet?' her ladyship asked, levelling her tortoise-shell pince-nez at me.

'I know,' I said. 'It is very mysterious. Mrs Lamington has had a thorough search made, and of course Clark and Matilda are above suspicion.'

'Of course,' she assented, still looking at me fixedly. 'Mrs Lamington would have me believe I never wore it at all,' she continued. 'But you saw it?'

'Of course I saw it,' I said impatiently. 'I said so at the time of the loss, if you remember.'

'I know,' she said. 'But your manner was so uncertain and hesitating that it seems unfortunately to have conveyed a doubt.'

'I am afraid I cannot help my manner,' I said stiffly.

'Perhaps you would repeat to Mr and Mrs Lamington that you did see it,' she persisted.

'Certainly, if you wish it,' I returned coldly.

She treated me to some moments of fixed scrutiny, and then she left as abruptly as she had come.

The second visit she paid me I was threading some beads for Evie, and kneeling in the bow-window. Although a *portière* curtain covered the door, I became aware from the sound of voices on the landing outside that the door itself was ajar.

I heard Mrs Lamington say, in accents I knew so well, distressed, wavering, undecided:

'Of course you can say what you like to her. You are the person principally concerned. She certainly appeared to be pushed for money that morning, but that might mean nothing. No; it is a ridiculous notion. I should as soon think of suspecting myself.'

There was a pause; then the muffled exclamation of consternation people emit when they discover their audience is larger than they bargained for, and Lady Crescent entered the room alone.

She merely nodded to me. Her equal for aggressive insolence would have been hard to find. She began by addressing the children. They both disliked her, and drew away as soon as civility permitted.

I continued to thread the beads in silence. I had always vague expectations of unpleasantness when Lady Crescent sought me out; and there was always the possibility of the unpleasantness being somehow connected with Jack.

'You don't ask if there is news of my bracelet,' she said suddenly.

'No,' I said. 'Is there?'

'There isn't,' she rejoined, with a solemn significance that wholly escaped me.

I returned to my beads.

'Miss Ashley,' she began again, 'what is your theory about its disappearance?'

I was bored by her persistency. An opal bracelet may be intrinsically valuable, but it has limits as a topic of conversation.

'I haven't any theory, Lady Crescent,' I said quietly. 'There isn't any explanation that I can see.'

'There is always an explanation of everything,' she argued.

'I dare say,' I assented, sick to death of the subject, 'if you can find it.'

'You think Clark and Matilda quite reliable?' she asked presently.

'Hadh't you better ask Mrs Lamington?' I said, at the extreme of my patience. 'They are her servants. She knows their characters.'

'I see you don't think them altogether reliable?' continued my exasperating interrogator.

'Lady Crescent,' I said angrily, 'I must ask you not to put words into my mouth. I consider Clark and Matilda as reliable as—as you are.' I did not add 'More so,' but I meant it.

'Then why did you not say so at once?' she asked testily, the upright jet ornament in her bonnet quivering angrily.

'Because the matter is not one that concerns me,' I retorted.

'I should have said it concerned every one on whom the shadow of a suspicion might rest,' she said—'all the guests at the dinner-party,' she added, catching my eye. Then she rose and sailed out of the room.

Left alone, I boiled to a white-heat. Sid jugged my elbow, but received no response. Evie relieved my trembling fingers of their string of coloured beads unopposed. I was confounded—utterly paralysed. The accusation that every individual feature of Lady Crescent's face conveyed—those bead-like black eyes of hers, her hawk-like nose, even to her aggressive tortoise-shell *pince-nez*—the accusation of all was clear enough now. She suspected *me*—me, who might have held my head as high as she in the social world had not pecuniary misfortune overtaken my family—of stealing her bracelet!

From a white-heat I became limp, inert, nerveless. More terrible than this woman's fiendish suspicions Mrs Lamington's wavering tones echoed in my ears: 'She certainly appeared to be pushed for money that morning.'

The hot blood surged in my face and tingled to the tips of my ears. What fiendish fate had prompted me on the very morning of the dinner-party to ask Mrs Lamington for arrears of salary due to me to send out to America to poor, wayward, erring Tom, who could not be impressed with the fact that his sister was not possessed of inexhaustible reserve funds? Then came the echo of Mrs Lamington's protesting tones: 'It is a ridiculous notion. I should as soon suspect myself.' But I knew little Mrs Lamington was in the hands of a woman like Lady Crescent as clay in the hands of the potter.

By-and-by the mists began to clear away. Then to my aid came the blessed thought of Jack. How utterly ridiculous were my fears and anxieties—how senseless the first fierce impulse to denounce Lady Crescent and then throw up my situation! I had a reaction of robust common-sense.

Jack would be home shortly. Meantime an old woman's vile suspicions could not harm me; and the odious piece of jewellery must surely turn up some day from some unexpected quarter. A broad band of eighteen carat gold (as Lady Crescent had frequently informed us), studded with opals and diamonds, does not ordinarily vanish without leaving a trace behind.

Time passed at the Lamingtons', bringing Jack's return nearer. I avoided contact with Lady Crescent and her daughter—not a difficult matter—and at times I even forgot there had ever existed an opal bracelet. What brought it to my recollection from time to time was a certain subtle change that I fancied I detected in Mrs Lamington's manner—a shade of coldness that had crept into it, and that seemed to interject a barrier between us that had never been there before.

It was nearing Christmas-time. The children were already in imagination drawn into that halo that to the child's mind seems invariably to glorify that special season of the year. Jack was coming. I too was infected by their spirits.

One day Mrs Lamington announced that she had taken two tickets for an evening concert, and that she would like me to take Sid. An infant prodigy was advertised to perform on the violin; and, with a mother's fond hopefulness, Mrs Lamington trusted the sight would act as a spur to her boy's ambition in this direction.

'I shall not make a practice of his going to evening concerts,' she said. 'But only just this once; it is so good for him to see what *can* be done.'

As the hour of the concert approached I despatched Sid to get ready, and went to my own room to do likewise.

It was a pleasant variety to the monotony of my evenings. I rarely had an opportunity of wearing anything gayer than a silk blouse in the quiet home evenings, so I shook out the bodice of my black lace dress, and laid it tenderly on the bed, reflecting that times had indeed changed since misfortune had thrown me on a cold world. Before these days it would have been no event for me to wear an evening-dress. Now I had not had one on since the night of Mrs Lamington's fateful dinner-party.

I lifted the skirt from the lowest drawer of the wardrobe and gave it a little adjusting shake, preparatory to depositing it beside the bodice. As I did so something hard struck my foot sharply. I turned it round. Something gleamed near the foot, half-concealed in the lace

flounce. I lifted it quickly. It was Lady Crescent's opal bracelet that stared me in the face! It hung by a mere thread of lace, that had entangled itself in the catch of the clasp. I extricated it carefully. Then the skirt dropped on the floor in a heap, and I sat staring at it for I do not know how long. In the first confusion of ideas came the flashing thought that I was the victim of a plot. '*An enemy hath done this.*' I had a confused mental vision of Marion's green, jealous eyes. Then I realised that the explanation was of the simplest. It had fallen from Lady Crescent's arm and caught in my dress.

My first impulse was to call Mrs Lamington, and then suddenly Sid's voice on the other side of the door brought my heart into my mouth, and caused me to do one of the most foolish things I have ever done in my life. I threw the bracelet into the depths of an open drawer under some clothes, turned the key on it, and bade him enter.

'Aren't you ready?' he asked, astonished at the early stage in which he found my proceedings. 'Are you ill? The cab's here.'

'I shall be downstairs in five minutes,' I said, despatching him, and throwing on my dress.

I went to the concert. Apparently there is something discouraging about perfection. The violinist prodigy goaded Sid to no emulation. He was too far above him, and fell flat in so far at least as acting as a spur to his ambition. Some one nearer his own level would have appealed to him more. I have noticed this in the big world, too, outside the violin.

As for me, the infant prodigy fiddled to deaf ears. I saw nothing before my eyes but the opal bracelet.

I might write volumes without being able to convey the trembling indecision, the fears, the apprehensions, the torture, the weary tossings, mental and physical, that made up that miserable night. Lady Crescent and Marion believed me a thief. Mrs Lamington half-believed it. How would they receive the confession of my discovering the bracelet entangled in my dress at this late date except as a cock-and-bull story, raked up to still conscience-prickings—a tardy repentance? By confession, so to speak, I would but make a virtue of necessity.

And so, hardly realising what I did, and because it seemed impossible for me to act otherwise without seriously inculpating myself, I kept the bracelet from day to day locked up in a drawer. I guarded it as if it were some guilty secret. The detestable piece of jewellery robbed me of sleep and appetite.

I exaggerated to myself the coldness of Mrs Lamington's manner. I flushed up to the eyes at lunch one day when Mr Lamington made a chance reference to the bracelet; and when it occurred to me that I had forgotten to lock the drawer where the hateful article was hidden I

broke into a cold perspiration. I started at the slightest sound. The sight of Lady Crescent in the hall or meeting Marion in the street produced a fit of trembling.

One day Mrs Lamington, remarking my pale face, I suppose, and nervous, spasmodic manner, said kindly:

'I am afraid you are not well, Miss Ashley. I shall be glad when Captain Vernon comes home'—whereat I burst into hysterical tears. I thought at the time she construed them into symptoms of guilt.

While I was perfectly aware that by acting as I was doing I was incriminating myself more and more, I seemed powerless to do anything else.

Life became an intolerable burden. I came so near being unhinged as sometimes at nights to be haunted by the idea that perhaps I really had taken the bracelet. I went the length of pondering whether it would be feasible to go out before daybreak and drop it into the river.

Before, however, I had succeeded in overbalancing my brain, or in sowing the seeds of a fatal consumption, I had news from Jack that he was on the eve of landing in England. I immediately revived. I had written merely the bare details of his aunt's loss—nothing more. Perhaps Jack might have a way to clear off the clouds of this daily nightmare. Then there crept into my mind the awful possibility of Jack's loyalty and love not being proof against Lady Crescent's and Marion's vile suspicions. Then I took myself to severe task for my lack of faith.

But no amount of theories about a person is equivalent to the assurance conveyed by that person's warm, living, tangible presence. I found this to be the case with Jack's arms round me and his bronzed face and blue eyes within easy reach of mine.

He held me off after the first greetings, noting with searching, dissatisfied gaze every detail of my features.

'What have you done to yourself?' he asked. 'Or what have they been doing to you?'—looking grimly round to avenge the deterioration in my personal appearance on the Lamingtons or any one else who might offer convenient.

'Done?' I repeated tremulously. 'Nothing.' I manfully winked away an uncomfortable moisture in my eyes. 'I have been bothered,' I added.

'How?' fiercely.

'Never mind just now,' I faltered, dying to unburden myself.

'But I do mind,' he persisted, still fierce and determined. 'My poor little girl! No one shall bother you with impunity;' and he straightened himself into an attitude of challenge towards my unknown tormentors.

His accents of tender solicitude, his ardent regards, after the frigid ones that had been my daily portion, proved in my unstrung condition to be the last straw.

I threw myself into his arms and broke into hysterical weeping. 'Oh Jack,' I cried, 'take me away from here! I would far rather starve on a crust with you than go through again what I have endured.'

I felt Jack's strong arms tremble.

'There, there, you are all upset,' he said in a voice in which one would soothe a child. 'Try to control yourself if you can, and tell me all about it.'

By-and-by I did succeed in controlling myself, and told him the whole matter. I concealed nothing. I slurred over no detail. I rehearsed the eventful evening—the dinner-table conversation between me and Lady Crescent, the after-dinner doings, my unwillingness to teach her the blanket-stitch—the friction between us over it—even to Sid's dramatic entrance in his night-gown, and the incriminating fact of my having left the drawing-room with him for ten minutes after wrenching him from Lady Crescent's embrace. I told him of Lady Crescent's and Marion's evident suspicions, of Lady Crescent's words to Mrs Lamington, which I had overheard, even my unfortunate request on the morning of the dinner-party for the arrears of salary, that seemed to imply a shortness of money and to supply the needed motive for my supposed crime. I told him of Mrs Lamington's growing coldness, and finally of my discovery of the bracelet in the lace flounce of my dress after many days, my first impulse to call Mrs Lamington, succeeded by deterring thoughts; of the interval that had elapsed since the loss, of the improbability of my story being accepted, and all my subsequent misery.

I unfolded it all to Jack, and he listened with unflinching attention, only interrupting me to ask a question here and there.

'Confound the bracelet and the old hag!' he exclaimed when I had concluded. 'She was not satisfied with the division of jewellery on my mother's death, and as good as asked me to supplement her share of the spoil. That was how I came to be the donor of the bracelet.'

'And now that you are here, Jack,' I said, with sudden bravery, 'I don't mind so much telling them how it all happened. It is funny what a difference your backing makes.'

Jack stroked his moustache thoughtfully.

'No,' he said at last; 'that's hardly my idea. Of course, what you ought to have done was to explain the first moment you found the beastly thing; but, not having done this, it is out of the question to do so at this distance of time.'

'Then how am I to get the bracelet back to Lady Crescent?' I asked.

Jack dived into his pocket and extracted some loose scraps of paper.

'Just rehearse the particulars once more, please,' he said, with the air of a detective, pencil in hand. I had always known that Jack was a first-rate soldier. I now discovered, from his accuracy,

his searching questions, the prominence he gave to apparently insignificant details, that he had in addition a distinct legal aptitude. He made copious jottings. Then he folded up the slips and put them in his pocket.

'You've got the bracelet all right?' he asked as he was leaving.

I nodded. 'I wish it were at the bottom of the Thames.'

'Or in Lady Crescent's jewel-case. That would answer the purpose equally well,' Jack said. 'But don't you worry your little head. Leave it to me.'

I need hardly say I was too glad to ease my burdened mind at the expense of Jack's.

The very next day he appeared in Hatton Gardens. He looked so confident that I almost thought that he had found a way for me out of the very tight place in which I found myself.

'I think I have it,' he said slowly. 'Just answer one or two more questions, please—will you? The little chap, Sid, who walks in his sleep—you say it was Lady Crescent's sudden grasp that waked him?'

'Yes,' I said. 'I had the greatest difficulty in disengaging him from her hold. She held on, I feel sure, just to annoy me.'

'It might have been in this friendly little skirmish that the bracelet became detached and hooked on to your skirt—eh?'

'Quite possible.'

He knitted his brows thoughtfully.

'You did not let the child recross the hall in his night-shirt alone, I presume?' he asked after a pause.

'No; I threw the sofa-blanket round him—the piece of work Lady Crescent and I quarrelled about. It was handy. You remember I told you Lady Crescent wanted the pattern.'

'I suppose she has got it by this time?' he asked.

'No, she hasn't,' I said. 'I happened to hear her reminding Mrs Lamington about it the other day.'

'What has become of it?' Jack asked.

I confess that about this juncture I thought Jack was becoming irrelevant.

'I don't know. Yes, by the way, I do. I remember Mrs Lamington folded it away the next morning with her own hands.'

'You are quite sure of this?'

'Quite sure. She said it was for a Christmas present, and it would only soil lying about as it had been doing.'

Jack nodded his head twice, apparently satisfied with my replies to his extraordinary questions.

'I think it will do,' he said in a satisfied tone, 'if you will just execute one little commission for me?'

'Yes,' I replied, thoroughly mystified.

'You have access to the place where this rug or sofa-blanket, or whatever it is, is kept?'



'Yes,' I returned. 'It is in a trunk in the lumber-room.'

'Good,' he said. 'I suppose you go there occasionally? You could go without it appearing in any way singular, I mean?'

'Easily. I keep things there too, in another trunk.'

'Good,' he reiterated again. 'Now,' he said, with a touch of repressed eagerness, 'what I want you to do is to take the bracelet and put it among the folds of the rug, the clasp open as you found it, the catch caught on the fabric of the rug instead of on your dress. Do you understand? Do you think you could do this?'

I opened my lips to exclaim.

'Trust me,' he said; and I closed them.

'I think I could,' I said.

'This afternoon—now?' he went on. 'Clark said Mrs Lamington had taken the children out.'

He took out his watch, and then smiled at my agitated face.

'Do you see a light?' he asked. Then, stopping me as I was about to speak: 'Trust me, and try not to be out of the way to-morrow about five—not to have the children out of the way either if you can manage it.'

'The schoolroom tea is at five,' I said.

After he left, with trembling fingers, I unlocked the drawer where I kept the opal bracelet, deposited it in my pocket, and crept up to the lumber-room with a beating heart and the stealthy tread of a thief. I opened the trunk that held the sofa-blanket. It reposed squarely folded under an eider-down quilt. I raised the latter gently, and taking one of the elaborately embroidered corners, easily hooked the catch of the bracelet into the silk thread. Even were the blanket suddenly unfolded, I, with a glimmering of Jack's meaning, made sure that it would still adhere. Then I replaced the quilt and crept downstairs. Merely to have my room rid of the hateful presence of the bracelet was a relief.

## BACK FROM MAGDALA; CHOLERA AND MUTINY ON THE HIGH SEAS.

By H. HERVEY.



THE 10th of June 1868 found me boarding the good ship *Zenobia*, lying in Annesley Bay. The Abyssinian campaign was over; the expedition to Magdala to release the prisoners and vindicate the far-reaching power of the British Lion had been successfully carried out; and now the universal cry was 'Home'—some to dear Old England, others to India. I was numbered among the latter.

Originally a paddle war-steamer of the Indian marine, the *Zenobia* had been recently purchased by some London shipowners, who had stripped her of machinery, lengthened her, and launched her on the bosom of the deep as a three-masted full-rigged sailer; and here she was, a chartered Government transport, the 'blue-peter' flying at her foretopmast-head, her canvas cast loose and anchor apeak, on the eve of leaving for Bombay. When joining the field-force I had voyaged in the *John Bright*, an opium screw-steamer, narrow as a knifeboard and swift as a greyhound, which ran across from Bombay to Zoulla in a little over a week. The prospect, therefore, of spending an indefinite period on this huge, 'heartless' three-master, at the mercy of the waves and the winds, was somewhat disconcerting; for, naturally enough, we one and all yearned to return to civilisation and get home, wherever that was.

My colleague, Brown, of the Telegraph Department; a transport-officer named Devine, in command of five hundred Punjabi mule-drivers; Dr Ratton, in medical charge of us all; Captain

Hutchinson, the rough, burly, north-country skipper; the first mate, an Irishman named O'Kelly; and, lastly, the writer—we composed the *élite* or 'cuddy-end' population of the ship. Corsy and Rob, the second and third mates—who, having 'come through the hawse-holes,' always preferred eating peas with their knives and dispensing with pocket-handkerchiefs—occupied a deckhouse amidships, and messed with the steward and gunner. The forecabin was peopled with a mixed crew of some thirty hands, composed of Yankees, South Americans, Maltese, and Greeks; the only Britisher among them being a Scotch lad named Ross. The mule-drivers were berthed 'tween-decks.

All went well for a few days—winds light; the ship, carrying every stitch, making about five knots, close-hauled. On this particular morning the waist was black with the Punjabis; the watch, when they had scrubbed decks, having nothing to do beyond trim sail occasionally, lolled about wherever they could find a patch of shade; while we on the poop aft amused ourselves to the best of our ability. Dr Ratton, on completing his usual round, considerably startled us by reporting that several of the Punjabis were ill with cholera. Consequently disinfecting measures were resorted to immediately after breakfast, the sick men segregated as far forward as practicable, and all other precautions taken. As the day wore on two natives died, while others were seized. The Punjabis soon became demoralised, and not a man could be coerced or persuaded to

sew up the corpses of their brethren and slip them overboard. The crew had, therefore, to be called on for the work; and we noticed they undertook it with reluctance, and behaved insubordinately when piped for the purpose.

To add to this undesirable state of affairs, it fell a dead calm; and there we lay like a 'painted ship upon a painted ocean,' with a crowd of cholera-stricken people, a crew of foreign disaffected seamen, and but one medical man to cope with the terrible visitation. While we stood deliberating at the break of the poop, with the din of the Punjabis' lamentations in our ears, the third mate, who had gone forward to get together some hands to man the gangway-doors for the purpose of disposing of several corpses, came aft and climbed the poop-ladder.

'It ain't no use, sir,' said he, touching his cap to the captain; 'they say as they didn't sign on for no such job as this 'ere. Not a soul on 'em will budge.'

'Lay forrard, and tell the bo'sun to pipe all hands aft; you and Corsy come back 'ere.—Stooard, ask Mr O'Kelly to step this way.—Gentlemen,' he added, turning to us, 'stand by me; there's nine on us, and we'll tackle 'em!'

Presently Rob returned, followed by the whole crew. The three mates and the steward ascended the ladder, Ross relieved the wheel, and the men stood in irregular groups on the maindeck, facing the poop-rails.

'Now, my lads!' cried the captain in a loud voice, addressing the sullen-looking crowd below him, 'what's your grievance? Appoint your spokesman, and let us 'ear all about it.'

After a little muttered confabulation, the sailors pushed forward one of their number—a big American, a typical Yankee, with long hair and a 'goatee,' dressed in a red flannel shirt, dirty white ducks thrust into rusty half-boots, and his waist swathed in a blue silk cummerbund, with an ugly knife peeping from its folds.

'Oh, you—eh?' remarked the skipper. 'Well, Silas Lampsey, what 'ave you to tell me?'

'Wal, boss,' replied the man, with a drawling nasal twang, 'the boys says that we didn't sign on articles at Liverpool for the job of heavin' a dead nigger over the side every five minutes of the day an' night; an' we are doggoned if we are goin' to do 't no more!'

'You refuse duty?'

'No, sree; we're willin' to work a healthy ship; but we've had enough of this 'ere. We doesn't care to vamose afore our time.'

'But how are we to get shot of the dead uns? You know the niggers won't do 't themselves.'

'Give the darned greasers a lambastin' with the rope's-end, and make 'em!'

'Yes, and 'av 'em at our throats, and all on us chucked overboard in a jiffy! You miserable son of a sea-cook! what do yer know of these 'ere

niggers? There's close on five 'undred on 'em, and every man-jack 'as a cutlass, as yer see!'

This was a fact; the mule-drivers, in common with the rest of our host of camp-followers, had been armed with drummers' swords, to be eventually given up at the arsenals of Bombay.

Another American now spoke up. 'This here doldrum acomin' on us has made it all the wusser,' said he. 'Joaquino here, as has been on the pilgrim run, knows these here parts, and says we mayn't get a breeze o' wind not for a month mebbe—didn't yer, Joaquino?'

'*Es verdad*,' replied Joaquino, the man appealed to, a swarthy Peruvian, with rings in his ears.

'There ain't no more round-shot to sink the greasers,' resumed Lampsey; 'the last went over the side this mornin'. How air yer agoin' to weight 'em, boss? This ain't a blessed steamboat, wi' firebars handy. Yer ain't agoin' to burrow through the notions to get at the ballast, all for the sake of a heap of dead niggers—air yer? I doesn't serpose as yer'll take the marlinspikes, break off stanchions, and wreck the darned ship for the same puppose—will yer?'

'I ain't agoin' to stand palaverin' with you chaps all day,' fumed the skipper. 'One word: will you turn to?'

'Barrin' heavin' of the corpses, we will, boss,' replied Lampsey. 'But, look here, that tarnation cholera'll stick to us as long as we don't get no wind, and we may all on us be toes up in the space of a dog-watch. So, will yer listen to our pupposal?'

'What is it?'

'Show yer British rag topside donnards to the first steamboat as comes along, and get 'em to tow us through the Straits; the wind'll be fair then, and not only blow the tub along, but the cholera out o' her as well.'

The proposal was as feasible as it was reasonable; the doctor, too, agreeing that a good wind would tend to purify the ship. So we persuaded the captain to acquiesce. We were certainly in a serious predicament, chiefly on account of the presence of the fell disease in our midst; it was more than probable that it would in time spread all over the vessel. Therefore we did all we knew to get the skipper to agree.

'All right, lads!' he said, leaning over the rails; 'I will speak the first steamboat as passes goin' our way.'

'Good!' exclaimed Lampsey. 'But, say! the sochner the hawser comes aboard the better; for, mind you, boss, ne'er a one on us'll lay no finger on a corpus again; yer'll have to tote 'em along yerselves.' Saying which he slouched away forward towards his mates.

Now came a most trying time. Not a breath of wind ruffled the surface of the water; the ship rolled gently on the oily swell, with all her sails—even to the royals—set, to catch the slightest stir. The deaths continued with alarm-

ing rapidity; and then, as Lampsey had said, there was actually nothing wherewith to weight the corpses. The steward, Ross the Scotch sailord, and one or two of our own private native servants—under the stimulus of reward paid down on the nail at so much per head—their mouths and noses muffled in carbolic-saturated towels, constituted the burial-party. These men, penetrating 'tween-decks, dragged the corpses up the hatchway, across the deck, and pushed them through the gangway doors, just as they were; for there was little time and less inclination to sew them up in canvas, as had been done at the outset. Being unweighted, the bodies refused to sink; the sharks, moreover, did not appear to fancy them; and, being impelled by the same current, they kept by the ship's side, bobbing up and down, rolling over, now on their backs, now face up, in the most horribly gruesome fashion. We in the cuddy were fast becoming demoralised as well; then the wretched Punjabis crowded at the doors, and appealed to us in piteous strains, invoking Allah to grant us a wind, and imploring us to pray to God with the same object. What could we do? We told them that we should hail the first steamer and get her to tow us into a wind, which would not only fill our sails but blow the cholera out of the ship. In the meantime we exhorted them to be patient and obey the doctor in all things.

Several steamers passed, going in the same direction, but too far off to communicate. At last, on the tenth day of the calm, we sighted a two-funnel steamer hull down in our wake. She came on slowly, and as she drew abreast of us, about a mile away, we hoisted our distress-signal, and anxiously awaited the result. In a few minutes she replied, whereupon we displayed a whole line of bunting; on reading which she altered her course and ranged up to within speaking distance.

'Steamer, ahoy!' shouted our skipper through his trumpet. 'What steamer's that?'

'*West Indian*,' bellowed a voice from the other's bridge; 'Jeddah to Bombay. What ship's that?'

'*Zenobia*; Annesley Bay to Bombay.'

'What's the matter?'

'Cholera! Will you tow us through the Straits?'

'Sorry we can't. Port-engine broken down; much as we can do to get along ourselves. Can we help you otherwise? Have you a doctor?'

'Yes.'

'Want medicines?'

'No, thanks; have lots. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye!'

In another minute she put up her helm and resumed her course.

'There's no 'elp for't but to wait for the next,' said the skipper.

True, there was no help for it; so we put on

the best face possible, and called on our fortitude and patience to aid us.

Presently the crew again came aft, this time on their own initiative, their demeanour more truculent than before. Whether the disappointment had irritated them, or whether, owing to the existing dislocated state of affairs, they had managed to gain access to the spirit-room, I do not know, but their bearing now was mutinous.

'Capt. Hutchinson!' called Lampsey roughly from the maindeck.

'Well?' replied the skipper, going to the rail, whither we all followed him.

'We ain't agoin' to stand this here no furrer—we ain't!'

'Ain't yer? Suppose you think as that there steamboat with 'arf a lung could a towed a twelve 'undred ship—do yer?'

'What we thinks or doesn't think ain't neither here nor there; but I tell yer what, this ship's a coffin—she is; and we ain't agoin' to stop in her—we ain't! Jest yer come along to the fo'castle and take a whiff o' the stink as comes through the cracks in the bulkheads, and then say if Christian sailor-men can stand it any longer!'

'Ave patience, can't yer? Another steamboat'll be along presently, and we'll stop 'er.'

'We kalkilate as we've drifted pretty considerable out o' the course, and ne'er a craft'll be acomin' this way; so we've made up our minds what ter do, and have come to give yer all a chanst in wid us.'

'Well, out with it! What 'ave yer made up yer minds to do?'

'Take to the boats, and leave the tub and the niggers to theirselves.'

'Yes?'

'They'll all be dead afore a week; so will us if we stop here. The ship is sartin to be picked up by some darned salvager.'

'Well, all I 'ave to say is,' replied the captain, leaning over the rail and speaking impressively, 'that the first as touches lift or tackle I'll put a bullet through 'im as sure as God made little apples!'

'I guess more nor one can play at that game!' exclaimed Lampsey, shaking his fist at the captain. 'Come on, mates!' he added to his fellows, and the whole crowd made off to the fore-castle. A storm was brewing, and we unanimously ranged ourselves on the side of law and order. I and the other passengers fished out our revolvers, loaded them, and stuck them in our belts; the skipper similarly armed himself and the officers; and several of us, descending the poop-ladder, cast loose the two small brass guns which the ship carried, and trundled them into the cuddy. Rob, Corsy, the steward, and the lad Ross all came aft; while the crew, gathered in clusters on the fore-castle-head, appeared to be deep in consultation. Thus there ensued a lull. We were in the cuddy, talking over the state of affairs,

Ross at the wheel, and O'Kelly, the chief mate, on deck looking out for steamers. The poor plague-stricken Punjabis frequently came to the door and asked if there were any signs of a wind; for they had evidently become imbued with the truth of what we had told them earlier in the day, that a breeze, in all probability, would rid them of the scourge. The atmosphere was dense and hot, without the slightest breath of air; and we sat anxious and watchful, expecting at any moment to come to open loggerheads with the crew.

'Below there!' suddenly called O'Kelly through the skylight.

'Ullo!' responded the skipper.

'Sure, sir, it looks black and threatening to the west; it's a breeze of wind, I'm thinking.'

At the welcome words we all followed the captain, and rushed on deck. The mate pointed to the west; and, true enough, the horizon in that direction presented a dark-brown aspect. There was something in the air, too—in the oppressive stillness—that presaged an atmospheric disturbance of some sort, and we eagerly waited to hear the captain's opinion.

'A sand-squall, by thunder!' exclaimed he. 'Twill be down on us in no time! All hands take in sail!' he roared, in the direction of the fore-castle. 'Be smart, lads; 'tis one o' them confounded tornadoes.'

'Stow yer slack as well as yer sails yerselves!' retorted Lampsey, with his hand to his mouth. 'We ain't agoin' to budge!'

I don't know what may have passed through the captain's mind at this terrible juncture; for every sail was set, and a squall fast bearing down on his ship—a full-rigged ship, fitted with the more cumbersome and old-fashioned tackle of that day—carrying quite five hundred souls all told, allowing for the deaths, and a valuable Government cargo. I know not what he contemplated, I say; but at that moment an unwonted commotion was observable among the hitherto apathetic Punjabis. They too had noticed the change in the sky's aspect, and, following our glances, had heard the short altercation between poop and fore-castle, had seen the threatening gestures of the disputants, and, without understanding what was being said, guessed its purport. Then scores of them, suddenly shaking off their lethargy, and ignorant of marine etiquette, swarmed up the poop-ladders, and asked what was the matter. Was a breeze coming at last? If so, why did not the sailors do what had been ordered? They knew enough to tell them that the canvas ought to be taken in. Devine and I, who were the only men on board conversant with Punjabi Hindustani, hastily explained the situation, the advancing storm, the consequent danger to the ship, clothed as she was to the mastheads, and the refusal of the crew to do their duty.

The Mohammedan mule-drivers at once realised

the situation. 'We will make them!' they shouted, their blood now thoroughly up. 'God has sent the wind to drive away the cholera, and shall we go to another death because your men are untrue to their salt? No! we will aid you! You are our protectors! After Allah, we look to you, and will stand by you! On, then, in the name of God! We will force these sons of defiled mothers to do their duty!'

Before we could stay them, some two hundred Punjabis rushed along the main-deck and mounted the fore-castle. The crew were ready to receive them. There ensued a fierce fight; knives were freely used against the now infuriated natives, who were, however, entirely unarmed, their cutlasses being in chests below-decks. Shrieks and groans assailed our ears, and we were about charging forward, revolver in hand, to quell the disturbance, when, numbers having gained the day, we saw the sailors driven along with kicks and cuffs by the victorious Punjabis; we saw them ascend the ratlins followed by the swarms of mule-drivers, who threatened by gestures to throw them into the sea if they did not immediately furl sail. The seamen, not daring to disobey, worked in fear of their lives; and in a few minutes the *Zenobia* floated under bare poles. With a low rumble the squall came on. Sand was in the air; it invaded our eyes, nostrils, and mouths; the hurricane struck the ship with terrific force, and swept on, leaving us well-nigh on our beam-ends—but safe!

The gust proving to be a precursor of a stiff but favourable breeze, sail was speedily made on the ship, and in due course we bowled along towards our destination, thankful for our deliverance from a combination of perils that once seemed to threaten us with annihilation.

Only two deaths occurred after that terrible day. Next morning the crew expressed contrition for their behaviour; the Punjabis, now full of renewed spirits, came aft in a body and interceded for their late antagonists; cuts and bruises were forgotten, and both parties shook hands in token of amity and absence of ill-will. The skipper, nothing loath, accorded his forgiveness, ordered extra grog to be served; and so, without further adventure or misadventure, we arrived safely in Bombay harbour on the twenty-eighth day after weighing anchor off the Abyssinian coast.

#### THE ROSE.

FAIR Queen of Flowers!

Whether thy robe be crimson, white, or gold,  
None can with thee compare.

Fragrant as fair,

Deep in thine heart a subtle essence lies,  
Covered by silken petals manifold,  
Till, these unfolding to the summer air,

The sweetness flies

Forth from the depths in which it lay concealed,  
As love at touch of love doth stand revealed.